

Message Text

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ACTION SCSE-00

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 ISO-00 SCA-01 DHA-02 L-03 H-02 CIAE-00

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O 080030Z DEC 76 ZFF-4

FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9069

UNCLAS MEXICO 15436

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CASC, MX

SUBJ: PRISONER HUNGER STRIKE IN MEXICO CITY: SITREP 1

REF: MEXICO 15333

1. SUMMARY: EMBASSY CONTACTED PRISONERS IN EACH PRISON, AND CONTRARY TO WHAT PRISON DIRECTORS HAD PREVIOUSLY INFORMED EMBASSY, SUBSTANTIAL NUMBERS OF AMERICAN PRISONERS ARE TAKING PART IN A HUNGER STRIKE. APPARENT GOAL OF STRIKE IS TO INFLUENCE PRESS, PUBLIC OPINION AND EXPECIALLY MEXICAN CONGRESS TO PASS REFORM OF ARTICLE 85 OF MEXICAN PENAL CODE (PAROLE FOR FIRST-TIME DRUG OFFENDERS) BEFORE THE MEXICAN CONGRESS GOES OUT OF SESSION AT END OF MONTH. MEXICAN CONGRESS WILL NOT RECONVENE UNTIL SEPTEMBER, 1977, UNLESS SPECIAL SESSION IS CALLED. END SUMMARY.

2. SANTA MARTA: CONOFF SPOKE TO APPROXIMATELY SIX PRISONERS WHO CLAIMED THAT STRIKE IN EFFECT SINCE SATURDAY WITH FULL SUPPORT OF AMERICAN PRISONERS, MOST OTHER FOREIGN PRISONERS AND SOME MEXICAN PRISONERS. STRIKE WAS CONFIRMED BY PRISON DIRECTOR WHO SAID THAT HE THOUGHT SOME OF STRIKERS WERE EATING AT NIGHT. NBC REPORTERS AND CAMERAMEN AT PRISON 12/6/76 AND 12/7/76.

3. RECLUSORIO ORIENTE: CONOFF SPOKE BY PHONE WITH PRISON SUB-DIRECTOR WHO STATED PRISONERS CLAIM TO UNCLASSIFIED

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BE ON HUNGER STRIKE BUT THAT THEY ACTUALLY WERE

EATING. HE REQUESTED THAT CONOFF CALL BACK IN ONE-HALF HOUR TO SPEAK BY PHONE WITH PRISONERS. ON CALLING BACK TO PRISON, CONOFF SPOKE WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE TWO DORMS WITH LARGEST CONCENTRATIONS OF AMCITS. BOTH CLAIMED ALMOST TOTAL SUPPORT AMONG AMERICANS AND ALSO BROAD SUPPORT FROM MEXICANS AND OTHER FOREIGN PRISONERS SINCE THE PAROLE WOULD BENEFIT MANY MORE MEXICANS THAN AMERICANS. ONE OF THE SPOKESMEN SAID THAT, IN HIS OPINION, THE PAROLE WOULD NOT BE PASSED IN ANY EVENT BUT THAT HE WISHED TO CREATE AS MUCH ADVERSE PUBLICITY FOR THE GOM AS POSSIBLE. BOTH SPOKESMEN SAID THAT THEY WERE IN GOOD HEALTH SO FAR. AFTER SPEAKING WITH PRISONER REPRESENTATIVES, CONOFF SPOKE WITH ANOTHER HIGHER ECHELON PRISON OFFICIAL WHO SAID HE BELIEVED AMCIT PARTICIPATION IN STRIKE WAS NOT TOTAL BUT THAT A MAJORITY, PERHAPS 70 TO 80 PERCENT, WERE PARTICIPATING. HE AT FIRST CLAIMED HE DID NOT KNOW THE EXTENT OF PARTICIPATION BY MEXICANS AND OTHER FOREIGN PRISONERS BUT ALLOWED THAT SUPPORT WAS PROBABLY STRONGEST AMONG COLOMBIAN PRISONERS.

4. LOS REYES PRISON FOR WOMEN: ALTHOUGH THERE HAS BEEN CONSIDERABLE UNREST IN THIS PRISON, (SEE REFTTEL) THE CONOFF CONFIRMED BY TELEPHONE THAT NONE OF THE WOMEN ARE CURRENTLY ON OPEN STRIKE. HOWEVER, AN AMERICAN CITIZEN REPORTED AFTER A PRIVATE VISIT TO LOS REYES DECEMBER 7 THAT MANY WOMEN PRISONERS ARE CONTINUING A VOLUNTARY FAST WHICH HAS BEEN IN PROCESS FOR APPROXIMATELY A WEEK. EMBOFFS PLAN TO VISIT LOS REYES DECEMBER 8 AND WILL INFORM DEPARTMENT OF GRAVITY AND NUMBER OF AMCIT PRISONERS PARTICIPATING IN THIS FAST.

5. RECLUSORIO NORTE: THE CONOFF VISITED THIS PRISON AND SPOKE TO DIRECTOR ANTONIO SANCHEZ GALINDO WHO INDICATED NO AMERICAN PRISONERS WERE ON STRIKE. AT THE REQUEST OF THE CONOFF, JAMES BROWN, SPOKESMAN FOR THE AMERICAN GROUP AT THIS PRISON, WAS CALLED IN AND UNCLASSIFIED

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CONFIRMED THAT THE AMERICANS IN NORTE HAVE NOT REACHED A DECISION WHETHER OR NOT TO STRIKE IN PROTEST OF THE MEXICAN CONGRESS' FAILURE TO PASS PAROLE LEGISLATION WHICH WOULD BENEFIT DRUG OFFENDERS. HE INDICATED, HOWEVER, THAT THEY MAY DO SO IN THE NEXT DAY OR TWO.

6. SCA ADMINISTRATOR WALENTYNOWICZ, SCS DIRECTOR GISE, STAFF DELS DOCKERY, FINLEY AND HOLSTINE AND

EMBASSY OFFICERS PLAN TO VISIT SANTA MARTA AND
LOS REYES DECEMBER 8 TO MEET WITH PRISONERS.
FURTHER ASSESSMENT OF STRIKE AND SUGGESTIONS FOR
HANDLING PRESS INQUIRIES WILL FOLLOW.
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